

THE IMPLICATIONS OF TERRORISM IN A WORLD OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Sînziana-Florina IANCU

„Carol I” National Defense University, Bucharest

Abstract: *Terrorism represents one of the most significant threats to the current security environment on a global level. It is a form of violence against humans, against their actions, against evolution. It simply creates chaos, anarchy, fear, and vulnerability. It is a form of trying to obtain the control through oppression and terror. This form of aggression rapidly expanded and brought methods through which states would become vulnerable. Terrorism has multiple motivations, most of them being forms of vindictive hatred towards values and actions that may be different from those belonging to terrorists. The phenomenon of terrorism is actually similar to a snowball, which, once formed and stirred up, it becomes larger and larger, thus, stopping it can only mean destruction and suffering on both sides. This issue has been long discussed that, currently, debating on this subject might be seen simply as a cliché. However, the reason for which terrorist actions are being continuously investigated and analyzed is the permanent change of techniques, tactics and procedures used by terrorists in order to create the element of surprise. An important aspect in this regard is for the national and international security and information structures to obtain and use information that might weaken or reveal the enemy, like the enemy's protective measures, the enemy's awareness on the situation and potential danger, potential logistical and/or human security breaches, enemy's weapons and technology etc ..*

Keywords: *terrorism, security, vulnerability, control, information, enemy, danger, technology.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the planning and execution of terrorist actions, insurgents objectives usually regard attacking the symbols of a nation or of the world, with great media impact.

There are many times when they choose crowded locations, so the psychological effect on the population is huge.

In this way, their actions will not only create panic and terror among population, but also an increased wave of distrust in state security institutions.

If at first, the violent actions went out of demonstrations and protests caused by the dissatisfaction of minorities and were limited, local and focused on institutions, nowadays this kind of actions has become widespread being caused by rebels' frustrations and discontents, directed not only towards institutions and their representatives, but also towards masses.

Jan Eichler[1] listed some of the views of world leaders regarding motives of contemporary terrorism, like the hatred towards Western values and desire of revenge against the involvement of Western states in the Islamic world.

Indeed, most recent terrorist attacks were publicly claimed by Muslims terrorists in response to the so-called aggressive and hostile attitude and involvement of the Western nations. Islam, however, is projecting itself as a “religion of peace”, although the image created by the media was that of a fanatic extremism, identified with terrorism.

This is, in fact, also Corina Nicoleta Comsa's opinion, which supports the fact that Islam have denied any other organizing and structuring of their own culture and civilization, because they are very good keepers of traditions and their religion[2].

Terrorism can be divided into several categories, some of which are listed by Mircea Muresan: terrorism response, pathogenic terrorism, fissure terrorism, punitive terrorism, ethno-nationalist terrorism and cyber terrorism[3]. Thereligiousonemayalso be added. From a historical point of view, terrorism has emerged in antiquity as a political attack, considered the first of terrorist practices, and over time has marked the evolution and history of great empires[4].

According to Aurelian Ratiu, terrorism is “an apparently chaotic and random system of asymmetric swift actions”[5]. He believes that there are three similar aspects in defining terrorism, as threat or violence, state or non-state elements and political, economic or religious purpose[6]. He also mentions an approach to defining terrorism of two Dutch researchers, Albert Jongman and Alex Schmid, from Leiden University, who collected a total of 109 academic and official definitions of the concept of “terrorism” and analyzed its main elements. They had concluded that the element of violence was present in 83.5% of the definitions, political goal in 65% and 51% emphasized the element of fear and terror induction; only 21% mentioned the fact that the targets were not previously chosen and only 17.5% contained civilians or non-combatants victims[7].

2. INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY – INSTRUMENTS OF TERRORISM

In a world of information, terrorists have learned how to make use of information in a favorable manner. In this context, media broadcasts information on the existence and severity of terrorism, thus giving great importance to the phenomenon, which can lead not only to an easier way of finding new followers (ISIS case), but also to the recognition of the disastrous effects of terrorist activity; in this manner, insurgents achieve one of the most important goals: publicity and creating panic and fear among the population, leading to the loss of safety feeling and distrust in state’s institutions, and, finally, leading to the destabilization of the nation.

Thus, on 10.13.2002[8], the Russian Council (Upper House of Parliament) approved the amendment to limit freedom of expression of the media on anti-terrorist operations carried out by state structures. In this way, measures of combating terrorism which are to be taken by the state won’t be analyzed or criticized by media; consequently, the developing of any anti-terrorism maneuver will remain hidden within all aspects (participating forces, location, tactics, details of the attack etc.).

Perhaps, limiting advertising terrorism, even at an indirect level, is, indeed, one of the solutions that could discourage insurgents; this way, their protest and manifestations, will not have the result of a public revenge, even if it will produce other undesirable effects. Quite often, the magnitude of an attack is not given just by the number of victims and the severity of the consequences, but actually by the involvement of media. Media impact is perhaps most important for terrorists, especially when vindictive actions are intended to be directed to national or international symbols to demonstrate their strength and effectiveness. The most useful method of using the information for terrorists remains media.

In a world of technology, Internet shouldn’t be ignored either. Even on the contrary, it can be a tool as powerful in activating, spreading and using of information that would promote terrorists.

Using Internet, they are looking for new members to recruit, to post footage of their insurgent actions in order to intimidate the targets, they justify their actions and claims or they make public certain requests and complaints. Moreover, some terrorist organizations have begun establishing their own Internet forums, web sites, blogs, they have access to television stations, all this in order to spread their influence and to gain recognition. According to Gigi Giurcani’s opinions, so far, there were posted numerous files that contained actions against “NATO troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, the schedule from the secret training camps, interpretation sessions of the precepts from the Qur’an, the stating of religious verdicts –“fatwa”, procedures of conversion to Islam, conversion calls to Jihad[9], kidnapping and beheadings of Western hostages.”[10].

The emergence of numerous organizations labeled by the West as “terrorist” ones was a reaction to the attempt of imposing Western democracy in cultures different from what is considered to be “modern” and “normal”.

For instance, author of “Islam”, Anne-Marie Delcambre, stated that in the Islam region, “every Muslim is obliged to deal with his other co-nationals, in order to determine them to do good things and prevent them from doing harm, and he is responsible for his co-nationals in the religious aspect, because the members of the community are like the fingers of the hand: if just one is sick, the others suffer.

Westernization arouses fear, because it leads to a new defining of the man, a man without family connection, free and autonomous.

For a Muslim, the status of being faithful means obtaining membership into the community.

There are no human rights, only duties of the believer who must respect the rights of God.”[11]

In this sense, those who chose to be warriors of “Jihad” / “Holy War” (“mujahedeens”) are convinced that they do it for the good and defense of their own culture and spirituality and for the preservation of specific Muslim traditions.

The main objective of the spiritual significance of “Holy War” lies in trying to extend the Islam, to protect it from the involvement and the offensive actions of the so-called “infidels” and to convert the non-believers to Islam. Fighters who do not survive after fighting the “Holy War” become “Shaheed” (the Muslim terminology for “martyr”) and get to see the Prophet, along with being offered the 72 virgins so that they relish forever.

Following wars triggered by the involvement of Western states in the Muslim territories such as Iraq and Afghanistan, terrorists tried to turn the situation to their advantage. Hence, during the chaos effect of wars, rebels had the necessary motivation to start terrorist actions through large scale attacks and they have also created “safe havens” and training bases, also obtaining the civilian population support, in some cases.

In the process of rapidly spreading scourge of terrorism have initially contributed the ignorance of the great powers and state institutions, too much self trust of the representatives of the great powers and, least but not last, the wars that were lead in the name of democracy. According to Stan Petrescu, terrorism is “an asymmetric threat, acting in the shadows, making use of the means, methods and processes of the intelligence activity complementary to violent direct action”[12].

He also thinks that “the proliferation of terrorism was favored by the manufacture and use of conventional explosives, chemical weapons, viruses, computers and nuclear and biological weapons” and the “possible introduction of terrorism on the Internet will attract the necessity of establishing < cyber policemen >”[13].

Unfortunately, this kind of weapons, especially those that imply explosive manufacture and computer viruses, can be easily obtained or created. In a world that is driven by computers and technology, computer programs that may harm IT systems can become quite dangerous.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The existence of terrorism in an era which is based on information creates the premises of a world threatened by chaos and anarchy. However, intelligence services, protective structures and also the international community can make a difference in the fight against terrorism, by using information against those who practice it.

Terrorism is based on actions that have the objective of creating negative effects to the target who is in opposition to the beliefs and terrorist mentality. In committing terrorist acts, terrorists use the information they have access to, the technology they possess or that they can buy, the level of vigilance of the target and their training knowledge in planning and conducting hostile actions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Jan Eichler, *Consecințele nefaste ale războiului împotriva terorismului*, *Impact Strategic*, no. 4[29]/2008, „Carol I” National Defense University Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 71
- [2] Corina Nicoleta Comșa, *Democratizarea lumii islamice, provocări și perspective*, în *Impact Strategic*, no. 4 [29]/2008, „Carol I” National Defense University Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 20.
- [3] Mircea Mureșan, *Terorism și religie la început de secol XXI*, în *Impact Strategic* no.3/2008, „Carol I” National Defense University Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 18.
- [4] Giurcan Gigi, *Terorismul cibernetic*, <http://www.unibuc.ro/studies/Doctorate2010Noiembrie/Giucan%20Gigi%20-%20Terorismul%20cibernetic/TERORISMUL%20CIBERNETIC%20REZUMAT.pdf>, 2010, Bucharest, p. 6 apud Chiș I., Popa C., *Terorismul contemporan*, ANI Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 165.
- [5] Aurelian Rațiu, *Asimetria Terorismului – Războiul celei de-a patra generații in Geopolitica*, 3rd year, no. 12, Top Form Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005, p. 73.
- [6] Idem.
- [7] Idem apud I. Dragoman, *Terorismul și crima organizată in Impact Strategic*, no.1/2004, „Carol I” National Defense University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004.
- [8] information taken from <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1101357.html> website page, opened on 11.09.2015/13.05.
- [9] Giurcan Gigi, *op.cit.*, p. 49 apud Vlădescu Andrei, *Second Life Jihad in Intelligence Magazine*, no. March-April, 2009, pag .11.
- [10] Giurcan Gigi, *op.cit, loc.cit.*
- [11] *Ibidem*, p. 22 apud Anne-Marie Delcambre, *Islamul*, CNI Coresi Publishing House, 3rd edition, Bucharest, 1999, p. 96.
- [12] Stan Petrescu, *Securitate internațională – tendințe și evoluții in Geopolitica*, 3rd year, no. 12, Top Form Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005, p. 94
- [13] *Ibidem*, p. 95 apud Radu-Alexandru Timofte, *Originile și mărirea, declinul și renașterea lumii informațiilor secrete*, ANI Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, p. 318.